

# Expanding the Role of Saudi Arabian National Guard in the War on Terrorism: A Strategic Vision

CSC 2004

Subject Area Strategic Issues

## ***PREFACE***

The purpose of this paper is to address efforts by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to counter the current global terrorism, and to propose an additional strategy to counter one facet that has to date received little attention.

Since, the Kingdom has adopted a joint service strategy involving all international security and military services to deal with potential attacks from terrorist organizations already in existence, but there has been almost no attention given to how to prevent frustrated and resentful young people from being tempted to become terrorists in the first place. The strategic vision I propose focuses on seeking to deter the Kingdom's youth from being recruited by terrorist groups in the wake of the attacks in U.S. on September 11, 2001 and in Saudi Arabia in May 12, 2003. Those youth are being especially by al-Qa'ida. This paper is a small gift to my country that has given me a lot.

I would like to thank Dr. David E. Long (Former Deputy Director of the State Department's Office of Counter Terrorism for Regional Policy and member of the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff) for his valuable time he spent with me which enriched me with his extensive knowledge of terrorism and counter terrorism and his rational analyses in this ambiguity realm.

I would also like to thank Dr. Kamal Beyoghlow and Lt. Col. David Rababy for their mentorship and help with this paper. Both provided critiques and guidance that allowed this paper to be turned into reality.

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE <b>2004</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2004 to 00-00-2004</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Expanding the Role of Saudi Arabian National Guard in the War on Terrorism: A Strategic Vision</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>United States Marine Corps, Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, 2076 South Street, Marine Corps Combat Dev Command, Quantico, VA, 22134-5068</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>51</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

**Title:** Expanding the Role of Saudi Arabia National Guard in the War on Terrorism:  
A Strategic Vision

**Author:** Major Fahad Alzahrani, Saudi Arabian National Guard

**Thesis:**

The Saudi Arabian National Guard is uniquely able to develop and implement programs to address a facet of the terrorist threat to the Kingdom that to date has received relatively little attention, deterring Saudi youth from joining terrorist groups in the first place.

**Discussion:**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has experienced terrorism before, but for the general public, the threat of terrorism turned into a reality first when most of September 11, 2001 (9/11) attacks in the United States were Saudis citizen (15 of the 19 terrorists), and second, in 2003, when terrorists attacked a housing compound in Riyadh on May 12, killing about 20 and wounding another 194, and in a second attack the following November, during the Muslims holy month of Ramadan. The 2003 attacks in particular brought home the reality that Saudi Arabia was the target of a major terrorist campaign.

This new face of terrorism evolved into what has become the most dangerous security threat to the Kingdom today. The threat stems from two major sources. First, `Osama Bin Laden has a personal grudge against the Saudi regime for stripping him of his Saudi citizenship, and even for inviting in American and other Western forces into the Kingdom to engage in Desert Storm instead of relying on his mujahhidin. Second and even more ominous, he is targeting disaffected Saudi youth to recruit into al-Qa'ida. Bin Laden's success in targeting Saudi youth was demonstrated in the 9/11 attacks.

Several realities have emerged from these attacks. First, terrorism in general will not likely ever be eradicated. It is too easy, too cheap, too available, and too tempting. Second, a collision of traditional cultural and religious practices and values with the secularizing influences of modernization is creating unprecedented social stress on some youth in Saudi Arabia. Third, young people are the most vulnerable to the stresses of modernization. Fourth, the information technology (IT) revolution has made the world a small village; and satellite TV, the internet and cellular phones have put Saudis instantly in touch with different cultures and with disturbing news of aggressive events in Palestine, Chechnya, Iraq and elsewhere. Finally, with abundant oil wealth, too much has been provided for Saudi youth without their having to earn it, Saudi youth have become physically and mentally soft. Now with a population explosion, per capita income is dropping and unsustainable expectations are increasingly becoming unmet, creating even more frustration and resentment, if not alienation and political cynicism.

Saudi Arabia is creating a multi-sided joint service approach to dealing with potential attacks from terrorist organizations already in existence, but there has been almost no attention given to how to prevent frustrated and resentful young people from being tempted to become

terrorists in the first place. The SANG is uniquely capable of addressing this problem, but important challenges remain.

Yet nowhere has there been a concerted, integrated strategic policy of seeking to prevent frustrated youth from becoming terrorists in the first place. Saudi youth who have a sense of direction, pride, and self-confidence are, as a rule not predisposed to seek meaning through violent means.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations (A Strategic Vision):**

The strategic vision includes reaching Saudi youth before they drift towards terrorism by giving them a new sense of purpose and direction. To accomplish this, I propose that the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) create a summer camp program for youth run on modified military principles, and dedicated to instilling the following qualities: self-discipline, self-confidence and personal achievement, pride in national cultural and religious heritage, and civic responsibility.

The objective of reaching Saudi youth before they drift toward fanaticism and terrorism can be addressed in a single mission statement: Instilling in Saudi young people a new sense of purpose through self-discipline, self-confidence, a sense of personal achievement, pride in national and religious heritage, and civic responsibility.

The SANG has historically played an important role beginning with the reunification of the modern Kingdom under its founder, King Abd al-Aziz, and subsequently evolving from a traditional, tribally-based military organization into a modern paramilitary internal security force. Additionally, the SANG has created a distinctive characteristic in preserving the Kingdom's cultural heritage.

It is the SANG's mission to "contribute to the nation building role and help develop (the capabilities of) the citizens," however, that I wish to emphasize. The joint anti-terrorist mission stated above focuses on countering the activities by terrorist groups already in being. But there is no policy or program in existence that seeks to prevent people from being attracted to organized terrorist activities in the first place. This paper will attempt to outline such a program.

## ***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

	<b><i>Page</i></b>
DISCLAIMER .....	ii
PREFACE .....	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW .....	1
CHAPTER I – THE SAUDI ARABIAN NATIONAL GUARD (SANG) AND ITS COUNTER- TERRORISM MISSION .....	7
CHAPTER II – THE TERRORIST THREAT IN SAUDI ARABIA TODAY .....	12
CHAPTER III – THE SANG ANTI-TERRORISM RESPONSE TODAY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES .....	21
CHAPTER IV – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	31

## ***APPENDICES***

	<b><i>Page</i></b>
A – What Is Terrorism .....	A-1
B – Osama Bin Laden .....	B-1

## ***TABLES***

	<b><i>Page</i></b>
Table 1 .....	15
Table 2 .....	16
Table 3 .....	17

# ***Expanding the Role of The Saudi Arabian National Guard***

## ***In the War on Terrorism: A Strategic Vision***

### ***Introduction and Overview***

During the Cold War, the world had to adjust to the reality that nuclear weapons could destroy the earth. In the Middle East, however, conventional warfare provided the greatest immediate threat to the national security of most states. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the threat of renewed conventional warfare in the Middle East has diminished, and in its place, international terrorism has become the greatest national security threat throughout the region. In the military context, this threat is expressed as asymmetrical warfare.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has experienced terrorism before, but for the general public, the threat of terrorism turned into a reality on May 12, 2003 with the attack on a residential compound in Riyadh, which resulted in the death of (20) people and injured of (194) people. This “wakeup call” was expressed eloquently by HRH Amir Khalid Al Faisal, Director General of the King Faisal Foundation, in the opening ceremonies of the presentation of the King Faisal International Prizes on 21 March 2004:

All Saudis young and old are neither shaken nor intimidated by terrorism, nor intimidated by speeches and opinions of misguided individuals now remorseful in jail. We are a nation that dedicated itself to Islam. We may have been less vigilant for a while, but the explosions woke us up. We shall be distracted no more. We shall remain vigilant in our pursuit of knowledge, reason and faith.

One of the paradoxes of terrorism is that it has been practiced for centuries -- in ancient times, the Hashashin (Assassins) got high on drugs before assassinating their enemies. But it has only been recently that terrorism has become a global strategic threat<sup>1</sup>. In today's high technology world, a handful of terrorists can strike with lightening speed and intensity and psychologically bring a whole country to its knees. By its nature, the threat of terrorism is

designed to create insecurity and stress, altering the way people look at themselves and the world around them. It destroys hopes and visions for a better, more peaceful environment for them and their children. It challenges religions and culture values and can undermine morale for present and future generations.<sup>2</sup>

Some military analysts have placed terrorism at the bottom of a spectrum of armed conflict, beginning with Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical (NBC) warfare, then conventional warfare, and finally unconventional or asymmetrical warfare (also called low intensity conflict or (LIC), which includes guerrilla wars and insurgencies, and finally terrorism.<sup>3</sup> While this paradigm adds a measure of precision by distinguishing the level of conflict, it fails to identify a major distinguishing characteristic of terrorism. Unlike other forms of armed conflict, including psychological operations (PSYOPS) that may use similar tactics, terrorism has no strategic military objectives. The strategic objective of terrorism is psychological, to intimidate governments through fear, either directly or through its people, in order to achieve a political goal.<sup>4</sup>

Military response is only one option when crafting effective counter-terrorist strategies. Other elements include diplomacy, law enforcement, public relations (hearts and minds), and most importantly a broad range of covert intelligence measures to identify terrorist groups and where they intend to strike. The lack of success of Israeli military tactics in dissuading Palestinian suicide attackers is a case in point of the futility relying alone on military force in the absence of efforts to win hearts and minds. At the same time, the potential availability of the components of NBC agents and weapons to terrorist groups, particularly biological and chemical agents, has extended the international terrorist threat to levels never before contemplated.

To combat terrorism, states must revise their defensive strategies and tactics, not just against today's threats, but also with the recognition that the motivation to participate in terrorist

acts can be too great, the means to engage too available and the financial costs too cheap to eradicate terrorism entirely. Nations must prepare for a long-term campaign to bring to its knees “the tiger we cannot kill” in order that current and future generations can live in an acceptable amount of security and be free to live their lives as they wish.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia witnessed two terrorist attacks in the last decade, one against the Office of the Program Manager of Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM-SANG) in Riyadh in 1995, and a second attack in 1996 at the Khobar Towers apartment complex in the Gulf port city of al-Khobar where U.S. military personnel were quartered.<sup>5</sup> Psychologically, these incidents did not target Saudis, and were seen by most Saudis as relatively small and insignificant.

The size and breadth of the international terrorist threat became apparent for most Saudis with the September 11, 2001 (9/11) attacks in the United States when it was discovered that 15 of the 19 terrorists were Saudi citizens.<sup>6</sup> But the threat really hit home on May 12, 2003, when terrorists attacked a housing compound in Riyadh, killing over 20 and wounding another 200. A second attack occurred in Riyadh in November of the same year, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which brought home even more the reality that Saudi Arabia was the target of a major terrorist campaign. In the face of this threat, the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) is tasked with a major homeland security role against terrorist operations inside the Kingdom. Its primary counter-terrorism mission is maintaining internal security and civil order in conjunction with the Kingdom’s military, law enforcement and intelligence services.

Since September 11, 2001 every effort has been made to improve the effectiveness of this joint mission. Saudi Arabia has made significant efforts to contain terrorism, which have included increasing security measures, freezing money transfers headed for terrorist groups,



arresting suspected terrorists, setting up joint task forces to hunt out terrorists and terrorist cells, and destroying terrorist training camps, and seizing large quantities of arms.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of successful efforts to this point, however a key question remains: what political, social, and economic grievances make people resort to terrorism in the first place? Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, there have been many popular and pseudo-scholarly articles written blaming terrorism on the teachings of Islam. This ignores the fact that over the past 40 years, terrorism was justified mainly on ethnic, national and secular ideological grounds rather than on religious grounds, and even in the latter case, Christian and Hindu terrorism rivaled Muslim terrorism.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, all world religions contain moral passages that can be used both to justify war and violence as well as peace and non-violence.<sup>9</sup> Islam prohibits unsanctioned violence, and specifically condemns suicide attacks. One must look deeper than superficial study of religious texts to understand what motivates a person to become a terrorist.

The factors underlying the attraction to terrorism are many and complex. In Saudi Arabia, modernization is bringing social change that, whether intentional or not, is challenging traditional values and practices; rapid oil wealth has created unrealistic expectations of material wealth that cannot possibly be sustained; and there is a population explosion that has created a bulge of young people (the median age is now 15 years old) which places more people on the job market than there are jobs. These factors taken all together have created a pool of frustrated, directionless young people predisposed to listen to distorted militant doctrines of such people such as `Osama Bin Laden, and of those restless, returning veterans from the Afghan war who want to relive the excitement of fighting for a higher cause. Moreover, perceived injustices against Muslims in Palestine, Iraq and elsewhere are fueled by images now instantly available worldwide due to the satellites technology. This latter has transformed the political and social

dynamics of the Arab and Islamic world. It has helped fasten anger and resentment against Israel and its main supporter, the United State.

This paper will outline preventive measures that can be taken to dissuade Saudi youth from joining terror organizations. The essay will argue that in addition to the SANG's homeland security mission, a second and possibly even more important SANG mission should be to direct disaffected members of the younger generation of Saudis away from turning to terrorist violence, and to help move them towards constructive political, economic and social integration if not participation. My strategic vision includes the creation of SANG-sponsored summer camps for young people between the ages of 14-17 years old that would help fasten Saudi cultural heritage. This would involve a comprehensive educational and cultural training.

The SANG has unique characteristics for reaching out to young people who have lost their direction. As a military service, it can instill discipline, pride of accomplishment and a work ethic, and based on its cultural activities, it can instill constructive pride of national heritage. The SANG has taken the lead in preserving Saudi cultural heritage in the creation and management of Janadriyah, an annual cultural festival held at a permanent site outside Riyadh that sponsors cultural events and recreates local architecture and crafts from every part of Saudi Arabia. Employing these assets, the SANG could make a major contribution to combating terrorism through reaching out to Saudi young people who have lost touch with their national heritage and whose self-discipline and pride of accomplishment has been dulled through over-indulgence of oil-revenue-provided easy living.

In a way, this vision is fighting fire with fire. In 1998, al-Qa'ida leader, `Osama Bin Laden, said in the interview on *Al-Jazeera Television* that he is targeting youth from 15 years old to 25 years old to carry out his beliefs.<sup>10</sup> Much of this focus occurred at summer camps to indoctrinate youth with militant political ideology under the guise of teaching Islam. My

strategic vision is to use the same tactics to combat terrorism -- to reach out to Saudi youth before al-Qa'ida and other militant terrorist groups can do so.

Once the program is established, it would be important to create follow-up programs for graduates to continue to serve their country through volunteer public service projects. Recruiting is a vital element for terrorism to be sustained. A major way to fight terrorism is to give young Saudis a new sense of purpose, hope and meaning through constructive rather than destructive service.

---

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> David E. Long, *The Anatomy of Terrorism*, (New York: Free Press, 1990), Chapter 1, "The Nature of Terrorism Today," p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, "What is Terrorism?," p. A-4.

<sup>3</sup> See Jerome W. Klingaman, "The Definition of Low Intensity Conflict and Its Relation to U.S. Defense Capabilities," in *Air Power for Counter Insurgency*, (undated pamphlet), cited in Stephen Sloan, *Beating International Terrorism: An Action Strategy for Preemption and Punishment*, (Maxwell AFB: Air University Press, 1986), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix A, *Loc. Cit.*

<sup>5</sup> This was where the offices of contract personnel working on the joint Saudi-U.S. SANG modernization program were located.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel01/092701hpic.htm>

<sup>7</sup> See Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. *Initiatives and actions taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabian in the War on Terrorism*. Washington, DC, September 2003.

<sup>8</sup> For example, the Tigers of Tamil Elam in Sri Lanka alone are responsible for tens of thousands of casualties in terrorist attacks. United States, Department of State, *Trends in International Terrorism*, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Richard E. Rubinstein, "The Psycho-Political Sources of Terrorism," in Charles N. Kegley, editor. *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*, (New York; prentice Hall, 2002), p. 148.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with `Osama Bin Laden, Al-Jazeera Television, 20 Sep 2001.

## *Chapter I*

### *The Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) and Its Counter-Terrorism Mission*

#### *The Evolution of SANG:*

The Saudi Arabian National Guard is uniquely positioned today to deal with the terrorist threat, given its history as a major player in the founding of the Saudi state under King Abd al-Aziz, and its evolution from a traditional tribal armed force to a modern, tribally based paramilitary internal security force. When Abd al-Aziz left Kuwait in 1901 and traveled to Najd to reclaim his family's patrimony from the Al Rashid of Ha'il, there were no modern military forces in central Arabia. It took Abd al-Aziz two decades finally to vanquish the Al Rashids, and another half decade to defeat the Hashimi ruler of the Hijaz, Sharif Husayn in 1926. The military arm of his campaign was the *Ikhwan* (Bretheren), a tribal, Bedouin force of warriors who were firm believers in the conservative Islamic teachings of Tawhid,<sup>1</sup> and fiercely loyal to Abd al-Aziz. According to John Habib, a historian of the Ikhwan:

Ibn Sa'ud's genius is neither found in his ability to gather the Bedouin under his banner through magnanimity or coercion -- the Bedouin has been won over by different leaders many times in the annals of peninsula history -- nor in his lightening conquest of Najd and his subsequent victories in the Hijaz and 'Asir. These conquests too had been achieved previously by other Arabian leaders. Rather his genius reflects itself in the creation of the Ikhwan movement, formed by preaching an Islamic revival among the Bedouin and by persuading them to settle in semi-religious-military-agricultural communities called *hujar* [sing. *hijra*].<sup>2</sup>

Restive after their warring days appeared over, tribal elements of the Ikhwan rebelled against the King, but were decisively defeated by him at the battle of Sibila in 1929, which turned out to be the last great Bedouin battle in history. The following year, Abd al-Aziz

annexed `Asir, which had been defeated by his son, Faysal, in 1924, and disbanded his tribal Muslim warriors.

Even after they were disbanded, however, the Ikhwan continued to play a role as irregular tribal units of the home militia. They were called “the White Army” after the flowing white robes (*thaubs*, the traditional Saudi male outer garment) they wore into battle, each warrior bringing his own rifle.<sup>3</sup>

The modern SANG was created in 1956 as a descendent of the White Army as an internal security force. In 1962, the now Crown Prince, Abdullah ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud became Commander-in-Chief (CinC), SANG, and has remained in that position until the present. Amir Abdullah first asked the British to help him establish a modernization program for SANG. Then, in 1973, Saudi Arabia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States that established the current U.S. Army security assistance program to modernize the SANG. The basic provision of the MOU was to “develop, within the Saudi Arabian National Guard, the capability to unilaterally initiate, sustain, and operate modern military organizations and systems.”<sup>4</sup> Today, the SANG is organized into ten active duty Brigades called *liwa*’s, and 26 reserve Regiments organized along tribal lines, now called *afwaj* (sing. *fuj*).<sup>5</sup>

#### *SANG Mission Statement:*

The National Guard is an armed paramilitary force whose primary mission is to maintain the internal security and stability of the nation and to defend its holy sites and its economic infrastructure in coordination with other Saudi armed forces.

Secondary missions include:

- Protection of vital and strategic installations assigned to the National Guard.
- Participation in the development and implementation of disaster plans.

- Participation in maintaining the security of pilgrimages during the Hajj season and
- Providing aid, assistance, religious guidance and health care for them.
- Providing health, technical, educational, cultural, and media services.
- Providing mentoring, guidance and spreading religious awareness among the National Guard personnel.
- Maintaining the national heritage and publicizing the national culture.
- Contributing to the nation building role and help developing [the capabilities of] the citizens.
- Cooperating with the other official agencies within the realm of the regulations and orders in serving the public interest.<sup>6</sup>

As seen from the above, SANG's counter-terrorism role derives from its primary mission as an internal security force. At the same time, its other missions go far beyond its military and security activities; it also includes a wide range of community services, including medical and health services, sports, educational and spiritual guidance programs, informational services, housing projects, and providing assistance to pilgrims to the annual Hajj. It is the combination of its primary and secondary missions that provide it with the unique qualifications to create a summer camp program to reach Saudi youth that might otherwise be tempted to affiliate with militant Islamist terrorist groups, and to prepare them to pursue meaningful lives as proud, constructive Saudi citizens.

Of particular interest to the Crown Prince and CinC SANG, HRH Amir Abdullah ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, is "maintaining the national heritage and publicizing the national culture," a SANG mission that is little known outside Saudi Arabia. Administered under SANG's Department of Culture and Education, it sponsors and

organizes each year the premier culture event in the Kingdom, the annual al-Janadriyah Heritage and Cultural Festival.

The festival, inaugurated by Royal Decree in 1405 AH (1985 AD), initially grew out of an annual traditional camel race and expanded from there. It is held at a huge fair grounds complex that contains reproductions of regional traditional architecture, shops of traditional craftsmen at work, and outdoor stages for performances of traditional music and national dances such as the al-Ardh (a traditional sword dance performed during celebrations). Performers gather from all over the Kingdom.

In many ways, Janadriyah, with its crowds of intellectuals, historians and just ordinary people seeking to preserve their cultural heritage against the influences of modern Western pop culture, is a modern version of the Suq al-`Ukaz, a market square in al-Ta'if where poets and orators of old would perform and compete for the favor of the onlookers.

Each year, the festival produces a number of books, pamphlets and publications on the various cultural events and arts and crafts exhibitions that are present. Recent publications include: Dr. Abd al-Rahman al-Hawawi, *The Book of Camels*, Dr. Nasir al-Harthi, *The Book of Woodworking*, and compendia of symposia, lectures, theater, and guides to other cultural events.<sup>7</sup>

### *Reform: Evolutionary or Revolutionary?*

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a militant, twisted interpretation of Islam has become the justification for violent terrorist acts throughout the Muslim world. In reality, the root cause is the stress of rapid modernization that has brought about changes to the very conservative, traditional Islamic society of Saudi Arabia that would have been unthinkable only a few decades ago. The collision of tradition and modernization has created a gap between those who believe that their traditional values can accommodate modernization and those who believe that modernization will destroy

those values. Since the reign of King Abd al-Aziz, Saudi Arabia has successfully followed a policy of evolutionary accommodation, “modernization without secularization.” Each year, however, the task becomes more difficult. Saudi young people in particular, who are unaware of their country’s great Islamic heritage and who are becoming marginalized by the population explosion, are increasingly receptive to calls for violence to restore the society to an imagined purity of the time of the birth of Islam.

But we cannot turn back the clock. Modernization will continue no matter how much damage it is capable of creating. As these young people reach adulthood, it is increasingly imperative that they acquire the self-discipline, self-confidence, and pride in their heritage to chose constructive evolutionary change over destructive revolutionary change. The SANG has a unique opportunity to guide them in this direction. It is living proof of maintaining traditional values while evolving into a modern force; and it is truly remarkable that the National Guard, of all institutions, has become a principal guardian of the historical heritage of Saudi culture.

---

### **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Tawhid, which comes from the Arabic word meaning “one,” emphasizes the oneness of God. It forms the basic doctrine of the eighteenth century revival movement of Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abd al Wahhab, popularly called Wahhabism. Followers of the revival prefer to be called *Muwahhidin*, or “Unitarians,” emphasizing their strong monotheistic belief.

<sup>2</sup> John S. Habib, *Ibn Sa`ud’s Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Najd and Their Role in the Creation of the Sa`udi Kingdom, 1910-1930*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), p. 6

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> The MOU entered into force on May 27, 1975. David E. Long, *The United States and Saudi Arabia: Ambivalent Allies*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), p. 70, n. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century: The Military and International Security Dimensions*, ((Westport, CT and London: Praeger, published in cooperation with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 2003), p. 170.

<sup>6</sup> Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Headquarters National Guard; Military Affairs; Directorate of Operations.

<http://www.janadria.org/><sup>7</sup>



## ***CHAPTER II***

### ***The Terrorist Threat in Saudi Arabia Today***

Many countries that have not directly had to face a terrorist threat have taken the position that terrorism is basically someone else's problem. When they are forced to deal with a threat to themselves, however, they quickly realize that it is not just someone else's problem; it is everybody's problem. Saudi Arabia had witnessed terrorist attacks for years before it was compelled to come to that conclusion.

This is not to say that Saudi Arabia has not had to deal with the hostile use of force. King Abd Al-Aziz employed Bedouin warriors, the Ikhwan, to reunite the Saudi state. Afterwards, however, many of the Ikhwan rebelled when the King adopted peaceful policies, and had to be put down by force. It was not until the Cold War and the spread of radical Arab socialism, however, that Saudi Arabia was forced to create modern, conventional military and security forces for the first time. Then and in subsequent years, the major Saudi security preoccupation was with conventional military threats. In the 1950s and 1960s, the greatest security threat to the Kingdom came from its radical Arab neighbors who were under the charismatic influence of President Nasser and his secular, socialist Arab nationalist rhetoric. Disaffected Arabs everywhere focused their rage and frustration on the handing over by the West of half of Palestine to a 30 percent Jewish minority, combined with deep seated historical resentment against European imperialism.

Saudi Arabia was one of the few Arab states to maintain friendly relations with the West. King Faisal not only condemned the secular, socialist nature of Nasserism and Ba'thism, but he was even more concerned over the threat of godless communism gaining a foothold in the Muslim world as a result of the growing cordial relations between Moscow and the radical Arab

states. As a result, a close mutual security relationship grew up between Saudi Arabia and the United States. Faisal was also a staunch anti Zionist, who argued that Israel was the source of many ills of Arab society and culture.

In the 1960s, Egypt and Saudi Arabia fought each other by proxy during the Yemeni Civil War, 1962-1967, Saudi Arabia supporting the royalist followers of the ousted Imam, and Egypt supporting its puppet regime under General Sallal.<sup>1</sup> During that period, Egypt sent Yemeni saboteurs into Saudi Arabia on what today would be called terrorist missions. However, all were captured and executed.<sup>2</sup>

In 1979, the pro-West monarchy in Iran collapsed, and Saudi Arabia was confronted for the first time with a militant Islamic regime that saw itself as a rival to the Kingdom for leadership of the Muslim world. As a result, the external security threat of Iran to the Kingdom took a new turn, focusing on Iran both as a conventional military threat and as supporters of terrorism in the name of “exporting the [Iranian] revolution.” Iranian-sponsored Shi’a terrorists detonated a bomb during the annual Hajj in 1989.<sup>3</sup>

The primary conventional military threat shifted again in 1990-1991 when Iraqi President Saddam invaded Kuwait, ending in his defeat by a coalition of forces in Desert Storm. Saudi Armed Forces acquitted themselves well during the Desert Storm, and with the Iraqi Armed Forces crushed and the Iranian Armed Forces seriously degraded since the Iranian revolution, there appeared to be no potential conventional military threat from its neighbors that the Saudis could not successfully counter.

No one suspected at the time that the primary threat to Saudi national security was about to take a drastic change, and that the threat would come from the Islamic fringe on the right rather than the communist fringe of the left. Probably the first modern militant Islamic terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia occurred in 1979 when a militant group of followers of Juhayman bin

Sayf al-`Utaybi took control of the holy Mosque in Makkah under the banner of *al-Takfir wal Hijra*.<sup>4</sup> At the time, Saudis and most Muslims considered it a sacrilegious act but not necessarily a terrorist act. There was no escaping the fact that the well-publicized attacks on OPM-SANG in 1995 and the Khobar Towers in 1996 were terrorist acts, but the consensus in the Kingdom was that they were isolated attacks by foreign terrorist groups.<sup>5</sup>

The evolution of the modern terrorist threat had actually begun over two decades earlier when the humiliating Arab defeat during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war discredited Arab nationalism as a rallying cry for the disaffected. In its place, a twisted militant Islamist political ideology of Jihad became the new idiom for expressing frustration and rage. For the most part, however, Islamists were more concerned with local, domestic issues than with conflict between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb (the Muslim World versus the World of War, or unbelievers). Saudi Arabia was largely unaffected since it was the cradle of Islam and its political ideology had been based on orthodox Islam all along.

A second major event was the Afghan War of 1979-1989. Many idealistic young Muslims, including Saudis, traveled to Afghanistan to participate in the Afghan War of 1979-1989 against the Soviet dominated regime in a war supported by the United States along with other Western and Muslim countries.<sup>6</sup> These young warriors, fighting what in their minds was a Jihad against atheistic communism, made the word, *Mujahhidin* (one engaged in a Jihad), a household word throughout the world. What made them different from older militant Islamist groups mainly interested in domestic grievances, however, was a sense of universalism gained during the Afghan War, and nurtured by `Osama Bin Laden.<sup>7</sup>

Through his great personal charisma, his extraordinary organizational talents and his use of modern information technology (IT), he was able to mold these veterans into a highly motivated, worldwide organization, al-Qa'ida, that was also highly decentralized. If the

leadership structure were degraded, its component terrorist groups could still operate independently. Upon returning to their homelands, many Mujahhidins began actively recruiting the next generation of youth to follow in their footsteps.

This new face of terrorism evolved into what has become the most dangerous security threat to the Kingdom today. The threat stems from two major sources. First of all, `Osama Bin Laden has a personal grudge against the Saudi regime for stripping him of his Saudi citizenship, and even worse, for inviting in American and other Western forces in Desert Storm instead of relying on his mujahhidin. Second and even more ominous, he is targeting disaffected Saudi youth to recruit into al-Qa'ida.<sup>8</sup> Bin Laden's success in targeting Saudi youth was demonstrated in the fact that 15 of the 19 terrorists in the 9/11 attacks were from Saudi Arabia (Table 1).

***Table 1: Saudi Participants in the September 11 Terrorist Attacks***

N	Full Name	DOB	Age on 9/11/2001
1	Abd al-Aziz al-Umari	28 May 1979	22 years old
2	Ustam al-Saqami	28 June 1976	25 years old
3	Wail al-Shehri	31 July 1973	28 years old
4	Walid al-Shehri	20 Dec 1978	22 years old
5	Ahmad al-Ghamdi	2 July 1979	22 years old
6	Hamza al-Ghamdi	18 Nov 1980	20 years old
7	Mahanid al-Shehri	7 May 1979	22 years old
8	Hani Hanjur	30 Aug 1972	29 years old
9	Khalid al-Mihdhar	5 May 1975	26 years old
10	Majid bin Ghanim	18 June 1977	24 years old
11	Nawaf al-Hazmi	9 Aug 1976	25 years old
12	Salim al-Hazmi	2 Feb 1981	20 years old
13	Ahmad al-Nami	7 Dec 1977	23 years old
14	Ahmad al-Haznawi	11 Oct 1980	20 years old
15	Said al-Ghamdi	21 Nov 1979	21 years old

*Source: United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, <http://www.fbi.gov>*

Saudi security forces were already seeking to identify possible terrorist groups within the Kingdom before the May 12 attack. In March 2003, the Ministry of Interior discovered a safe house in the Ishbilia district of Riyadh that provided some leads of terrorist activity and resulted in the Saudi Interior Ministry releasing the names and pictures of the “Ishbilia cell” on May 6<sup>th</sup> 2003 (Table 2).

**Table 2: Ishbilia Cell**

N	Full Name	DOB	Age on May 2003
1	Turki Al-Dandany	1974	29
2	Ali Al-Ghamdi	1974	29
3	Khaled Al-Juhany	1975	28
4	Saleh Al-`Oafi	1967	38
5	Abd al-Aziz Al-Moqren	1974	29
6	Abd Al-Karim al-Yaziji	1968	35
7	Hani Algamdi	Unknown	
8	Muhammad Al-Sheheri	1979	24
9	Rakan Al-Saikhan	1978	25
10	Yousif Alobeariy	Unknown	
11	Othman Al-`Amri	1977	26
12	Bander Al-Ghamdi	1975	28
13	Ahmed Al-Dakhil	1977	26
14	Hamed Al-Shammeri	1977	26
15	Faisal Al-Dakhil	Unknown	
16	Sultan Al-Qahtani	1976	27
17	Jubran Hakmi	1976	27
18	Abd al-Rahman Jubara	Unknown	
19	Khaled Hajj	Unknown	

*Source: Saudi Press Agency (<http://www.spa.gov.sa>)*

After the May attacks, Saudi security services identified the 26 names of attackers involved, either killed or captured. They called themselves *al-Muwahhidin*, (meaning “Unitarians”), the name the followers of the revival movement of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab called themselves.<sup>9</sup> This list of names, released by the Ministry of Interior on

December 7, 2003, also contains some members of the Ishibilia cell list. (Table 3)

**Table 3: Al-Muwahhidin**

N	Full Name	DOB	Age on May 2003
1	Abdal-majid Mona'ia		Unknown
2	Abdullah Al-Soba'I		Unknown
3	Abd al-Aziz Al Muqrin	1974	29
4	Naser Al Rashid		Unknown
5	Faisal Al-Dakhil		Unknown
6	Rakan Al-Saikhan	1978	25
7	Bander Aldakhil		Unknown
8	Faris Al-Zahrani		Unknown
9	Khaled Hajj		Unknown
10	`Othman Al-`Amri	1977	26
11	Talal Anbari		Unknown
12	Khaled Al-Qurashi		Unknown
13	Al-Mohati Kareem		Unknown
14	Saleh al-`Oafy	1967	38
15	Amer Al-Shehery		Unknown
16	Mansur Faqiah		Unknown
17	Ibrahim Al-Raiss		Unknown
18	Abdullah Al-Roshod		Unknown
19	Isa Oashon		Unknown
20	Saud Al-`Utaibi		Unknown
21	Abd al-Rahman Yazji		Unknown
22	Taleb Al-Taleb		Unknown
23	Ahmed Al-Fadli		Unknown
24	Hussain Al-Hoski		Unknown
25	Mustafa Mubarki		Unknown
26	Sultan Al-`Utaibi		Unknown

*Source: Saudi Press Agency (<http://www.spa.gov.sa>)*

Because of the overlapping names, it is still not certain whether the two lists represent separate groups or parts of a larger organization, or to what degree they (it) might have been degraded by killing or capture. In an interview with the Saudi newspaper, *Al-Watan*, on

December 7, the Minister of Interior in the Kingdom said that most of the terrorists were youths, and the older ones were recruited when they themselves were youth. All of them, he said, subscribed to the militant doctrine of Al-Takfir wal-Hijra. The Minister, in response to a question about who is responsible for allowing those youths to be an easy target for recruiting by terrorism groups, said families and parents are responsible for their children and they have to cooperate with the government to help our youth.<sup>10</sup>

This raises the question of why Saudi youth are so vulnerable to becoming militant Islamic terrorists. Part of the reason is demographic. Since the advent of Saudi oil wealth in the late 1940s, Saudi Arabia has undergone a major population explosion, increasing almost ten times by the present day. The estimated current Saudi population is now 17.2 million,<sup>11</sup> and the median age is estimated at 15 years old.<sup>12</sup>

This has resulted in a large and increasingly marginalized younger generation. Each year, far more young Saudis enter the job market than there are jobs that meet their expectations. This has bred an underclass of young people who basically live off their parents, and have lost a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. The resulting frustration and anger this situation fosters has in turn created a pool of frustrated, angry young people torn between the pleasures of secular Western culture and guilt at abandoning their traditional Islamic values.<sup>13</sup> Bin Laden saw a way to entice them into devoting their energies, and even sacrificing their lives, in return for self-purification from yielding to the temptations of secular Western pop culture. Terrorism to them is a high moral cause. He also realized that the optimum ages for recruiting disaffected youth was between 15 and 25 years old. In an interview with al-Jazeera Television, `Osama said that when they are younger than 15 years old, they are still children, and when they are over 25 years old, they have already begun their adult life cycle, busily looking to the future or already married and may have children.<sup>14</sup> Thus, it was no coincidence that most of those captured or

killed in the May and November 2003 terrorist attacks in Riyadh were between 15 and 25.

There is no doubt that the threat of terrorist activities by Saudi youth is connected organizationally to al-Qa'ida, and psychologically to other independent and quasi-independent Jihadist terrorist groups, and that the terrorist threat to Saudi Arabia is global in scope. But it would be a mistake to assume that the global threat is monolithic. Al-Qa'ida was purposely organized in a decentralized fashion in order to attract as many pre-existing groups to its cause and to enable its affiliates, both inside Saudi Arabia and outside to remain functional even if the al-Qa'ida leadership is degraded. Countering both the immediate global threat and the domestic threat requires the combined efforts of all Saudi internal security, law enforcement and military services of which the SANG is a part. In the long term, however, attention must be given not only to counter the threat posed by existing terrorist organizations, but also to prevent future recruitment to keep the threat alive. The strategic vision that will be discussed in this paper argues for an expanded SANG mission not only to participate in joint counter-terrorism activities, but also to use its combined military discipline and its cultural preservation mission to reach vulnerable Saudi youth before they can be lured into participation in terrorist activities.

---

### **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the Yemeni Civil War, see Robert W. Stookey, *Yemen: The Politics of the Yemen Arab Republic*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), pp. 246-249.

<sup>2</sup> David E. Long, personal papers. See also Saeed M. Badeeb, *The Saudi-Egyptian Conflict over North Yemen, 1962-1970*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), p. 39-40.

<sup>3</sup> See Mordechai Abir, *Saudi Arabia: Government, Society and the Gulf Crisis*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 142. Iran masterminded a bloody bomb attack during the 1989 Hajj for which 16 Kuwaiti Hajjis recruited by an Iranian diplomat in Kuwait were arrested and subsequently executed.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Takfir wal-Hijra (al-Takfir and al-Hijra in Arabic) means "Expiation [from heresy] and Expatriation. The term was originally coined by the Muslim Brothers in Egypt in the 1970s, and directed particularly at Muslim leaders and scholars who, they believed, were guilty of heresy, which justified remove them from the Islamic world. It subsequently became a slogan for cleansing the Islamic world of all unbelievers by force.

<sup>5</sup> A parallel can be made with the American experience. Virtually no one in the United States was willing to believe that terrorist attacks should actually succeed on American soil until the Oklahoma attack in 1995, and even then, it



---

was widely assumed that those responsible were foreign agents. It was not until the September 11 attacks that there was widespread realization that terrorism is an international problem that is shared by everyone.

<sup>6</sup> Again, there is a striking parallel with idealistic Europeans and Americans who went to Spain to fight with Marxists against the Fascist regime under General Franco in the 1930s.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix B for a news account of the life of Bin Laden. Mujahhidin, or “Jihadists,” interpret Jihad as “holy war” against unbelievers, a meaning widely used in the West. In fact, Jihad has a much broader meaning, the promotion of virtue and the resistance to vice, in both one’s private and corporate life.

<sup>8</sup> One expert on violent behavior, Ted Robert Gurr, has deduced from the large body of psychological literature on the “frustration-anger-aggression syndrome” the hypothesis that aggression (the product of anger) is the main response to frustration, and that those who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence to its source in proportion to the intensity of their frustration. See Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971). As discussed in the Introduction, there is a large and growing number of young people in Saudi Arabia who are increasingly frustrated and marginalized from society. It is this group, predisposed to violence, that Bin Laden is concentrating on as potential al-Qa’ida recruits.

<sup>9</sup> The term “Wahhabi,” was given Abd al-Wahhab’s followers by their opponents and subsequently adopted by the Western media.

<sup>10</sup> *Al-Watan (The Nation)*, Riyadh, December 6, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, Saudi Arabia, <http://www.cia.gov/publicaons/factbook/geos/sa.html> 2002. In addition, there are 5,576,076 resident aliens, including foreign workers and dependents.

<sup>12</sup> David E. Long, “Saudi Arabia in 2008,” (Unpublished paper presented in Washington, DC, August, 2003), p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of terrorism as a form of self-purification from guilt, see Richard E. Rubenstein, “The Psycho-Political Sources of Terrorism,” in Charles N. Kegley, ed. *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 2002), pp. 147-148.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with `Osama Bin Laden, Al-Jazeera Television, September 20, 2001.

### ***Chapter III***

#### ***The SANG Anti-Terrorism Response Today:***

##### ***Challenges and Opportunities***

###### ***Meeting the Domestic Terrorism Challenge:***

Long before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Saudi Arabia was deeply involved in countering international terrorism. For example, good intelligence is probably the most critical weapon of all in the war against terrorism,<sup>1</sup> and for many years, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has cooperated with many Arab and other countries in sharing intelligence concerning terrorists and terrorist groups.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Saudi Arabia did not consider terrorism to be a domestic problem. Even the 1995 and 1996 terrorist attacks in the Kingdom appeared to be international and regional in scope.

The fact that fifteen of the nineteen terrorists on September 11 were Saudis brought home the fact that there was a domestic as well as an international dimension to the threat, and the terrorist attacks in Riyadh in May and November 2003 left no doubt that the Kingdom had a major domestic terrorist threat on its hands. Although the attacks appear to have been guided by al-Qa'ida, they were carried out by Saudis in their own country and against their own people as well as other Muslims. In the face of this direct national security threat, the Kingdom has substantially expanded its anti-terrorism policies at home and its antiterrorism cooperation with other countries.<sup>3</sup>

Several realities emerged from the 2003 attacks. First, terrorism in general will not likely ever be eradicated. It is too easy, too cheap, too available, and too tempting. Second, a collision

of traditional cultural and religious practices and values with the secularizing influences of modernization is creating unprecedented social stress on some youth in Saudi Arabia. Third, young people are the most vulnerable to the stresses of modernization. Fourth, the information technology (IT) revolution has made the world a small village; and satellite TV, the internet and cellular phones have put young Saudis instantly in touch with different cultures and with disturbing news of aggressive events in Palestine, Iraq, Chechnya and elsewhere. Finally, Saudi youth have become physically and mentally soft. With abundant oil wealth, too much has been provided for them without their having to earn it. Now with a population explosion, per capita income is dropping and their unsustainable expectations are increasingly unmet, creating even more frustration and resentment.

Osama Bin Laden recognized all this when he began targeting young people between 15 and 25 to recruit as terrorists.<sup>4</sup> Many of today's Jihadist terrorist leaders went as young men to fight in the Afghan War as Mujahhidin; and tomorrow's terrorists will come from today's frustrated, marginalized young people. During the annual Hajj Khutba (sermon) this year, Shaikh Abd al-Aziz Al al-Shaikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Council of Senior Ulama (Muslim religious scholars), condemned terrorism as counter to Islamic law, and recognizing that its violent actions appeal most to culturally disoriented young people, added that youth without cultural heritage have no bright future.<sup>5</sup>

### *Seizing the Opportunity: A Strategic Vision*

To meet the challenge of the terrorist threat, Saudi Arabia has implemented a combined, joint service strategy to deal with potential attacks from already existing foreign and domestic terrorist organizations. The SANG plays an important role in this strategy. The focus, however,

is on the threat posed by groups and organizations already in existence. There has been almost no attention given to how to prevent frustrated and resentful young people from being tempted to become terrorists in the first place.

### *Reaching Out To Young People: A New SANG Mission*

There is widespread consensus in Saudi Arabia that younger generations are increasingly directionless and frustrated. The causes, already mentioned above, are several, including a population explosion that has created a disproportionate number of young people, unsustainable economic expectations resulting from rapidly disappearing over-abundance of oil-generated personal wealth; and the future shock of rapid modernization that is challenging traditional social, religious and cultural values. The focus of counter-terrorism policies not only in Saudi Arabia but also throughout the world has been on disabling terrorist groups from successfully launching attacks. Yet nowhere has there been a concerted, integrated strategic policy of seeking to prevent frustrated youth from becoming terrorists in the first place. Young people who have a sense of direction, pride, and self-confidence are as a rule not predisposed to seek meaning through violent means. Even if a program to instill young people with such traits is not completely effective, it will still fulfill a socially valuable goal of creating better citizens. There are, in effect, no minuses to the approach and the strategic vision to attain these goals.

The objective of reaching Saudi youth before they drift toward fanaticism and terrorism can be addressed in a single mission statement: Instilling in Saudi young people a new sense of purpose through self-discipline, self-confidence, a sense of personal achievement, pride in national and religious heritage, and civic responsibility. Let us look at each of these elements:

- Self-Discipline: Discipline: SANG, as a military service, is qualified to instill discipline in young people. With self-discipline, they can achieve the physical, mental and moral fitness that can equip them to meet the challenges and stresses of modernization without giving up their cultural and religious values.

- Self-Confidence and Personal Achievement: SANG stresses personal achievement which breeds self-confidence by requiring each individual to stretch himself beyond what he thinks he is capable of.

- Pride in National Cultural and Religious Heritage: The SANG has pioneered in preserving the cultural heritage of the Kingdom in the creation of the Janadriyah Festival and the facilities attached to it. In addition, the SANG itself evolved from a joint heritage of national and religious loyalty. The ancestor of the SANG was the Ikhwan, warriors of Islam under King Abd al-Aziz who restored peace, Islamic law and political order to the warring tribes in central Arabia. It is in the common good of all Saudis that pride in religious heritage and pride in national heritage go hand in hand.

- Civic Responsibility: Terrorists are fanatically engaged in righting what they believe are wrongs. Preserving rights are important, but they must be balanced with responsibility – to oneself, one's family, one's nation and one's God. The SANG stresses civic responsibility and public service.

To accomplish the strategic vision of reaching Saudi youth before they drift toward becoming terrorists, I propose that the SANG create a summer camp program for youth run on modified military principles, and dedicated to instilling the qualities outlined in the mission statement:

- Organization: Each camp will be staffed by SANG officers and men skilled in administration, maintenance, health care, and in all the programmed activities offered by the camp. The camp will consist of eight to ten *khaymahs* (tents). Campers, representing all parts of the Kingdom, live together as a unit in “khaymahs” (tents) of eight to ten boys between 14 and 17. Each khaymah will have a specially trained junior SANG officer to be its adult counselor, and under his guidance and supervision, each khaymah after an appropriate time will elect a captain and a staff officer who will be second in command and will be responsible to the counselor for keeping up with the khaymah’s participation in all activities.

- Responsibilities: Campers will be responsible for maintaining the camp, including keeping their khaymahs neat and clean, helping the professional staff with the preparation of meals (including dressing out animals for meat dishes), cleaning up after meals, and other details. All assigned work will be mandatory and work crews will be graded on the quality of work.

- Programmed Activities: The programs will be created to encourage the qualities mentioned in the mission statement, but will be designed to be fun, challenging and confidence and character building. They will include learning basic traditional handicrafts such as metal working, leather working, wood working, and basket making; traditional desert skills such as cooking, falconry, marksmanship, archery, and camel and horseback riding; cultural skills such as oratory contests, prose reading and reciting (including Qur’an), poetry writing and reading, traditional music and dances, and athletics such as football (Soccer). Both khaymahs and individuals will compete, and awards will be given, not just on competitiveness alone, but also for attitude, self-improvement, cooperativeness, work ethic and other factors. A major emphasis will be on insuring that every khaymah and every camper wins multiple awards as a means of

bolstering self-confidence and pride. In addition, inspirational guest lecturers will talk on various subjects such as religion, national and regional history, social customs and culture, health and hygiene, and on professional fields with the aim of making campers think for themselves rather than merely simply memorizing what they are told.

By instilling these qualities, the camps can not only redirect Saudi youth away from temptation to become involved in violent terrorist acts, but it will also better prepare them to become proud, disciplined and constructive citizens.

---

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> David E. Long, *The Anatomy of Terrorism*, (New York: The Free Press, 1990), p.

<sup>2</sup> Personal Communication, Dr. Saeed M. Badeeb, former Deputy Director, Saudi Istakhbarat (Intelligence Service), February 16, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, “*Saudi Arabia and the Fight Against Terrorist Financing*,” (Washington D.C., March 24, 2004), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> `Osama Bin Laden, Interview on Al-Jazeera, 20 Sep 2001.

<sup>5</sup> The sermon was delivered on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the Muslim lunar month of Dhu al-Hijjah. This year it occurred on 31 January 2004. This day marks the high point of the Hajj in which all Hajjis (pilgrims) must be standing on the Plain of Arafat (near Makkah) for Maghrib (Sunset) Prayers. According to the Saudi media, nearly 2.5 million Hajjis attended this year, and millions more throughout the Muslim world heard the sermon on radio and television.

## *Chapter IV*

### *Summary and Conclusion*

Although terrorism has been around for as long as human history, the great strides in information, communications, transportation and weapons technology has made it the greatest threat to the national security of virtually every nation in the world since the end of the Cold War. Because the means to carry out terrorist acts are so cheap, so available, and so tempting, terrorism is likely to remain a major global threat for the foreseeable future.

For a combination of both internal and external reasons, Saudi Arabia now faces a major terrorist threat from misguided fanatics who are using distorted interpretations of Islam to justify their violent actions. In response to the threat, the Saudi Arabian government has initiated a joint service strategy that includes all its internal security, intelligence, military and diplomatic services. As the primary paramilitary internal security service, the SANG plays a major role in this joint strategy, and because terrorism is a long-term threat, it will continue to do so indefinitely.

The Saudi counter-terrorism strategy's major focus is on deterring the activities of groups and organizations already in existence. While this is an absolute necessity, there is no policy or program in existence that seeks to prevent its own people from being attracted to organized terrorist activities in the first place, as was demonstrated in the 2003 terrorist attacks in Riyadh. This is a particularly acute problem inside the Kingdom, given the rapid population explosion and the vast number of frustrated younger Saudis who can no longer find jobs and whose lives have become directionless and meaningless despite their immediate physical needs being largely met by their extended families.



It is addressing this problem that I am proposing a new mission for the SANG. The SANG possesses unique qualifications for helping to deter Saudi youth from falling prey to those who seek to recruit them to commit terrorist acts in the name of their twisted interpretation of Islam. First, the SANG's direct predecessor, the Ikhwan (the Brethren), played a historically important role in the reunification of the modern Kingdom under its founder, King Abd al-Aziz, and subsequently the SANG evolved from a traditional, tribally-based military organization into a modern paramilitary internal security force. Second, the SANG has assumed a distinctive mission characteristic in "maintaining the national heritage and publicizing the national culture," the highlight of which is the annual Janadriyah Heritage and Cultural Festival.

Until the rise of the global terrorist threat, these two missions did not appear to complement each other. The strategic vision expressed in this paper argues that now they do, both tied to an additional SANG mission to "contribute to the nation building role and help develop (the capabilities of) the citizens." Together, these missions provide for SANG a unique opportunity to reach out to Saudi young people *before* they are seduced by terrorist doctrines.

It is my strategic vision that the SANG can help create new, constructive meaning and direction for Saudi youth, based on personal discipline and appreciation of roots and traditional values, that can deter them from heeding terrorist rhetoric. Furthermore, the SANG, with its military discipline and its nation-building mission, is uniquely equipped to implement this vision. A new sense of purpose through self-discipline, self-confidence, a sense of personal achievement, pride in national and religious heritage, and civic responsibility is the best way of preventing those among our young people from turning to terrorism in the first place. Moreover, the success of this strategic vision will not only check the temptation of Saudi youth to rebel and

become involved in terrorist activities, but it will create a rich human resource for Saudi Arabia for nation building.

The skeptic might well respond to this strategic vision by asking, “Yes, but what if your vision fails? What potential obstacles are there that might cause it to fail and how do you meet the challenge they pose?” Of course there are no guarantees in this life and this strategic vision is not immune to failure any more than any other vision, from Hannibal to Von Clausewitz. To answer those questions, however, it is important to make clear that there is no permanent solution to terrorism. We have stated earlier that it is too cheap, too available and too tempting ever to be eradicated. Thus, failure permanently to eradicate terrorism, even in a single country, is not relevant to the value of the vision. Second, as we have also stated earlier, terrorism cannot be effectively combated through the implementation of one or two strategic elements. Saudi Arabia is already using a multi-service approach that includes internal and external security forces, law enforcement, intelligence, and diplomacy public relations. Without the use of all these elements, the war against terrorism – reducing it to manageable proportions that allow citizens to live normal lives in peace and reasonable security – cannot be effectively conducted.

None of these elements, however, address the potential threat of the rapidly increasing numbers Saudi young people who are ill prepared to compete for meaningful, and ever scarcer jobs, and who have lost touch with their proud heritage. These young people form a growing pool of discontented that militant xenophobes such as `Osama Bin Laden can draw from in recruiting fresh recruits to terrorist organizations.

In responding to the skeptics, therefore, the relevant question to be asked is: How will the establishment of SANG Heritage Camps for Young People benefit Saudi Arabia’s collective intra-governmental efforts to combat terrorism? Even if the answer is that it will be only

marginal, that is an improvement over no effort at all. But the probability is great that such a program will be far more than marginal. First, there is the demonstrated success of similar culture camps in Europe and the United States for the past two centuries. Even in Saudi Arabia, Islamist camps, largely ignored by the authorities until just recently, have been shown to instill common purpose. The strategic vision is aimed at fighting fire with fire – using strategies that have worked well for Jihadists seeking to recruit Saudi youth. Second, the literature on terrorism emphasizes the role of bonding in small groups, often before actually becoming terrorists.<sup>1</sup> The camps are designed for young people from each individual tent to bond with each other as they live, work and play together as a unit. Finally, camp personnel working with the youth will be able to learn what their hopes, fears and expectations are. This can provide a database for seeking to deter them from being attracted to terrorist activity.

This is a long-term mission to help counter a long-term threat; but time is short. Already, the median age in Saudi Arabia is 15 years old. Steps must be taken now to instill new, constructive meaning to the unborn millions in the years to come.

---

#### *ENDNOTES*

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Travis Hirschi, “Social Bond Theory,” in *Causes of Delinquency*, (Transactional Publications, February 2002).

## ***Bibliography***

Abir, Mordechai. *Saudi Arabia: Government, Society and the Gulf Crisis*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.

Aljazeera TV. *Interview with Osama bin Laden*. 1998.

Al-Luheidan, H.E. Shaikh Saleh bin Muhammad (Chairman of the Saudi Supreme Judicial Council). *Supreme Judicial Council Speaks Out Against Terrorist Acts*. Washington, D.C.: The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, September 14, 2001.

Badeeb, Saeed M. *The Saudi-Egyptian Conflict over North Yemen, 1962-1970*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986.

Bergman, Lowell, David K. Leonard, and Harry Kreisler. *The U.S. and the Islamic World I: Saudi Arabia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California at Berkeley; Institute of International Studies, Educational Technology Services, 2002.

Charles N. Kegley, ec. *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 2002)

Clutterbuek, Richard. *Guerrillas and Terrorists*. London: Faber and Faber, 1977.

Cordesman, Anthony H. *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century*. Washington D.C.: Strategic and International Studies Center, 2003.

Gold, Dore. *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publications, 2003.

Gurr, Ted. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970.

Habib, John S. *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Najd and Their Role in the Creation of the Sa'udi Kingdom, 1910-1930*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978.

Hirschi, Travis, *Causes of Delinquency*. Transactional Publications, 2002.

Klingaman, Jerome W. "The Definition of Low Intensity Conflict and Its Relation to U.S. Defense Capabilities." in *Air Power for Counter Insurgency*, (undated pamphlet), cited in Stephen Sloan, *Beating International Terrorism: An Action Strategy for Preemption and Punishment*. Maxwell AFB: Air University Press, 1986.

Long, David E. *The Anatomy Of Terrorism*. New York, The Free Press, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The United States and Saudi Arabia: Ambivalent Allies*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985.

Rathmell, Andrew, and Mustafa M. Alani. *Saudi Arabia: The Threat from Within*. Coulsdon, England: Jane's Information Group, 1996.

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. *Initiatives and actions taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabian in the War on Terrorism*. Washington, DC, September 2003.

Rubenstein, Richard E. "The Psycho-Political Sources of Terrorism," in Charles N. Kegley, editor. *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*. New York; prentice Hall, 2002.

Saudi Arabia, National Guard, Janadria Festival, <http://www.janadria.org>

Stookey, Robert W, *Yemen: The Politics of the Yemen Arab Republic*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978.

United Nations (UN), <http://www.un.org>

United States, Department of Defense. "Joint Pub 3-07.2, *Joint Doctrine, Tactics and Techniques for Combating Terrorism*," 25 June 1993.

United States, Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, <http://www.fbi.gov>

United States, The Central Intelligence Agency, <http://www.cia.gov>

United States, Department of State. *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2002* (April 2003).

Washington Post. "Saudi Missteps Helped Bin Laden Gain Power." October 15, 2001.

## ***APPENDIX A***

### ***What is Terrorism?***

Although terrorism is as old as history, it has in recent years acquired new dimension in its ability to threaten both governments and their people by taking advantage of the stresses of modern-day life and modern technology, particularly information, communications and weapons technology. Because it enables a small handful of people to threaten and intimidate the lives of millions of people, it is very important to understand this dangerous phenomenon. The first step in countering terrorism is to understand it, and for that we will look at efforts to define it.

The main difficulty in defining terrorism is that it includes many elements, not all of which are present in any given case and many of which can also be present in non-terrorist activities. For example, strategies and tactics cannot only differ greatly among terrorist groups, but can also be used by drug cartels and other criminal organizations.

In addition, it is difficult to define terrorism on the basis of intentions. Terrorists and freedom fighters generally have the same or similar political intentions and even use the same extra-legal tactics, so that the only difference between the two can often come down to what side a person is on. Finally, it is also difficult to define terrorism on the basis of capabilities. Despite the attention given to the potential use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by terrorists, most terrorist acts use low-tech weapons. The September 11 attackers essentially used box openers to take over the aircraft and jet fuel to ignite their targets. Low-tech weapons are too cheap and too easily available to make capabilities a useful definitional component. In short, because of people's perceptions of what terrorism is and who the terrorists are varies from ethnic group to ethnic group, country to country and religion to religion, there are many definitions of terrorism but little agreement about which groups they do or do not apply to.

Probably the most comprehensive legal definitions of terrorism are embodied in international treaties, conventions and protocols. They include: the 1970 Hague Treaty for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft; the 1971 Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation; the 1973 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents; the 1979 UNGA International Convention against Taking Hostages; the 1980 Vienna Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; the 1988 Montreal Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, (a supplement to the 1971 Montreal Convention); the 1988 Rome Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against Maritime Navigation; the 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf; the 1997 UNGA International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings; and the 1999 UNGA International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism.<sup>1</sup>

None of these international treaties are entirely binding. In the first place, phrases such as “in accordance with [each state party’s] domestic legal principles,” provide an escape for any party that wishes to ignore its treaty obligations. Secondly, in the absence of any mandatory international enforcement mechanism, international compliance is largely a matter of signatory states’ political interests.

The US government has also created a definition of terrorism which it has used “for statistical and analytical purposes” since 1983, and is now contained in Title 22 of the United State [Legal] Code, Section 2656f(d). It states:

The term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational

groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.

The term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. definitions purposely do not address intentions of the actors, and the State Department itself even admits that “no one definition has ever gained universal acceptance.”<sup>3</sup> This enables the United States to avoid condemning Israel for terrorism, for example, when clandestine Israeli agents carry out lethal acts that meet the criteria for terrorism by the United States’ own definition, such as the murder of PLO leader Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) in Tunis in 1988.

In addition, the United States brands certain groups that are legitimately fighting for the liberation of their homelands under foreign occupation, including Lebanese groups that finally succeeded in ending the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon in May 2002, and Palestinian groups that are still struggling to rid their homeland of foreign occupation.

The bottom line is that while all states and all world religions condemn terrorism, definitions of what it actually is and who it applies to are inevitably written to allow each state’s assessment of its own national political interests to come first.

Nevertheless, even if one is not able to create an adequate definition, it is up to the politicians to determine what is an act of terrorism when they see it. From the point of view of those professional services -- intelligence, diplomatic, military, security and law enforcement -- whose mission is to counter terrorism, it would be more productive to look at characteristics than to compare definitions. Terrorist characteristics can be grouped in four general categories: goals, strategies, operations, and organization.<sup>4</sup>



*Goals:* As indicated above, the ultimate goals of terrorism are political. Whatever other characteristics are present, political goals are a basic element of terrorism and set it apart from other non-sanctioned criminal acts or acts of mentally or emotionally disturbed persons.

Political goals virtually always involve a sense of grievance or injustice that cannot be addressed by any other means. Thus terrorism is often described as a tactic of last resort in which the moral imperative of the ends justifies the means, no matter how immoral they might be.<sup>5</sup> In addition, it is common, particularly in ideologically based terrorism, to raise the political goals to the level of universal moral principles. Thus, al-Qa'ida has raised its goal of ridding the Muslim world of all secular Western influences from a political struggle to a holy struggle justified by the Islamic obligation of Jihad, which it narrowly interprets as holy war. In fact, Jihad in its broader context means the propagation of virtue and suppression of vice in one's personal as well as communal life. Indeed, no major religion justifies or condones terrorism no matter what the goal.

*Strategies and Tactics:* The overall strategy and tactics to achieve strategic political goals is not to gain military advantage, but to create terror, and then to exploit the fear it generates to intimidate governments and peoples in order to achieve tactical and ultimately strategic political goals. Looked at this way, terrorism is above all a psychological weapon. The success of 9/11 was not the number of people killed, but the terror that spread throughout the American people, thousands of whom went out and bought duct tape to protect themselves because the government told them to do so. An old Chinese proverb says, "Kill one, frighten ten thousand."<sup>6</sup>

*Operations:* The primary operational characteristic of terrorism is the premeditated use or threat of violence. In order to succeed, terrorist operations are almost always criminal and, to avoid detection, always covert. They are also relatively cheap. The concentration of law

enforcement services on trying to stop terrorist funding assumes that high-cost WMD would be the terrorists' weapons of choice, but thus far, terrorists have achieved the status of a global threat using low-tech weapons to great effect. In the scheme of things, such terrorist weapons are too cheap, too available, and too easy to activate for funding ever to be a predominant counter-terrorism tool.

*Organization:* Terrorism is by and large a small group activity. A major reason is that cell groups can avoid detection far easier than mass groups. Also, in many cases the small groups have banded together even before they become terrorists. For that reason, although it is possible to severely cripple a large terrorist organization like al-Qa'ida, that is not enough to cripple its component small group parts. Many of those groups actually predate their affiliation with al-Qa'ida

*Conclusion:* Terrorism is made up of many component parts, and fighting it will require the participation of many military, and civilian services in a coordinated effort. Because it has so many faces, it will also require those services to adopt new and creative planning and organizational vision to master it.

---

### ***ENDNOTE***

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, "International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism," (<http://un.org/law/cod/finterr.htm>), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> United States, Department of State, "Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001," (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2002), p. xvi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> These categories are taken from David E. Long, *The Anatomy of Terrorism*, (New York: Free Press, 1990), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Richard Clutterbuck, *Guerrillas and Terrorists*, (Chicago, Athens, OH and London: Ohio State University Press, 1977), p. 13.

## ***APPENDIX B***

### ***Osama Bin Laden***

**Osama Bin Laden: The truth behind the world's most wanted man. The truth about the prime suspect for the world's worst terrorist atrocity is shrouded in myth and misinformation. But Chris Blackhurst has gained unprecedented access to private dossiers, friends and family to reveal the real Osama bin Laden.**

16 September 2001: Osama bin Laden has never received funding from the US Central Intelligence Agency and does not have a huge fortune, say sources close to the fugitive terrorist leader.

An investigation by the *Independent* on Sunday has gained unprecedented access to an exhaustive dossier on the life of the world's most wanted man. Including material supplied anonymously by a bin Laden relative and fellow Saudi dissidents, it paints a remarkable picture of the suspected instigator of last week's carnage, countering the widely accepted notion that he accepted aid from the CIA. It also suggests that far from being able to draw upon a \$300m fortune, a claim made regularly in the Western press, his wealth amounts to no more than a few million dollars.

Mr. bin Laden has survived numerous assassination and kidnap attempts, achieving almost mythical status among his militant Muslim supporters. They do not believe his mountain hideaway will be penetrated, and they point to a secret planned raid by US Special Forces in 1997, which had to be aborted. This and a series of other incidents have contributed towards Mr. bin Laden being seen by his followers as a virtual superman.

It was not always so. Like other figures who went on to become monsters, much of his life was relatively carefree and mundane. Usama, or to give him his family spelling, Osama, was born in 1957, the seventh son among 54 children (an incredible tally in Western eyes but not in the Muslim world where more than one wife is common). In all, his father had 30 wives. His mother was Syrian, his father a South Yemeni. Mohammed Awad, his father, immigrated to Saudi Arabia around 1930. He was poor and worked as a porter in Jeddah. By the time he died in 1970, he was the owner of the biggest construction company in the Saudi kingdom. Mohammed made his big break by tendering to build palaces for King Saud at much lower rates than his rivals. He became close to the royal family, especially Faisal. In the Saud-Faisal power struggle in the 1960s he persuaded Saud to stand down in favor of Faisal.

When Saud went, the government coffers were bare and Mr. bin Laden paid the whole country's civil servants' wages for six months. Such support did not go unrewarded: he was made minister of public works and all projects were to go to Mohammed's firm. According to members of the bin Laden family, their father was a devoted Muslim; not crazily so, just a regular worshipper. He was also humble, despite his wealth, keeping his old bag from his days as a porter as a reminder of where he had come from. Bin Laden senior was a tough character, ordering his children to follow a special daily regime he had devised for them. From an early age, they were expected to behave confidently and politely. Several of the children, though not Osama, were educated in more Western Arab countries such as Egypt, and traveled widely.

Osama's father died when he was 13. Four years later he married a Syrian girl who was also a distant member of his family. Today he has four wives. He was religious but, like his father, not especially so. At school and university he joined the Muslim Brotherhood. Again, this

was not extraordinary: his interest, like many others of his age, was scholarly. Certainly, say those who knew him from that time he was not the zealot he is today.

Contrary to reports, claim Saudi sources, the only countries he has been to are those on the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Sudan. Stories of trips to Switzerland, Philippines and London are all unfounded.

At university, Islam was compulsory, and he was taught by two renowned scholars: Abdullah Azzam, who later became a major figure in Afghanistan, and Mohammed Quttub, a writer and philosopher. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the young and well-off bin Laden went to Pakistan and was taken by his hosts, Jammāt Islāmī, to meet the refugees and their leaders. When he returned he collected money and supplies for the Afghan resistance, the Mujahedin. He made another trip to deliver the aid, taking with him Afghan and Pakistani workers from the Bin Laden Company. In 1982, Mr. bin Laden reinforced his links with the Mujahedin, sending them equipment and arms.

He spent more time in Afghanistan and became involved in gun battles with the Soviets. As a wealthy Saudi he stood out. Other Arabs followed him. Two years later, he opened a guesthouse in Peshawar, which became a stopping-off point for Arab Mujahedin fighters. At the same time, Abdullah Azzam, his old mentor, launched the Jihad Service Bureau, a Mujahedin press and publishing centre, in Peshawar. The town, with its guesthouse and media bureau, became a focus for Saudi and other Arab guerrillas. Numbers became so large that Mr. bin Laden built camps for the Arab Mujahedin inside Afghanistan. He assumed command, although the legion had been joined by former officers from Egypt, Syria, Saudi and Algeria. This was remarkable.

Mr. bin Laden is shy, says little and is studiously serious, none of the usual qualities attributed to a leader of soldiers. He deliberately set himself apart from the rest, preferring to read and think alone (or to be seen reading and thinking, thus adding to his allure). He does, though, have more of the attributes associated with mythical warriors than any son of a Saudi multi-millionaire. He is tall, lean and has high cheekbones. His fellow soldiers could not fail to be impressed by his dedication.

Whatever he lacked in experience, Mr. bin Laden made up with organizational skills, and was adept at managing the media. He was brave, unafraid to face enemy fire. Overall, he was bombed 40 times. He was wounded several times and hospitalized more than once. He was also extremely careful. Try as they might, the Soviets could not kill him.

Early on, he realized that any unknown package, any unexpected visitor could spell danger. While other commanders died, Mr. bin Laden lived. From 1984 to 1989, he was a committed soldier, leading his foreign legionnaires in at least six major encounters with the Soviets. To many people in the Islamic world, he began to cut a romantic, T E Lawrence-type figure, a freedom fighter against the oppressive Soviet invader.

In 1988, he decided to put his affairs and those of his colleagues on a firmer footing. He gave the umbrella group for his guesthouse and camps a name: al-Qa'ada, Arabic for "the base". Talk of the CIA funding him and assisting him at this time, say Mr. bin Laden and his supporters, is unfounded. They even go further, to insist he has never had any contact with US officials. The CIA did back the Mujahedin, but these, they say, were different factions from Mr. bin Laden's.

He was always a committed Muslim, believing his struggle was as much about defending

his religion as defeating the Soviet Union. (It would be wrong, though, to suppose this automatically made him a religious fanatic because his views were shared by many Muslims.) From his Muslim Brotherhood days he had an anti-US streak, again, not uncommon among young Muslims and had feared for US encroachment in Saudi.

The idea he needed US money, say his close associates, is not true, either. He was of independent means; he knew rich Saudis; many of his fundamentalist followers were themselves idealists from relatively wealthy families and the weapons they used were cheap. After the Soviets withdrew in 1989, Mr. bin Laden returned home. Fired by his success in Afghanistan, he wanted to start a new front or jihad in South Yemen. The Saudis, alarmed at the prospect of his growing power, banned him from leaving. The restriction did not silence him. He denounced Saddam Hussein, claiming the Iraqi leader was about to invade Kuwait. In Saudi, such behavior did not endear him to the authorities. He was told to shut up and refused, but all the time he was quietly advising the Saudi King Fahad of the danger coming from Iraq.

Today, Mr. bin Laden is always described as a Saudi dissident. It was not always so. In those days he was loyal to the Saudi royal family. When he warned about Iraq they listened; all they asked was that he kept his strictures private. His contact with the Saudi rulers was via two of his brothers. They were close to two senior Saudi ministers who received his messages and passed them on to the king. He stayed distant from Saudi intelligence, which he saw as under the influence of the US.

Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait should have been Mr. bin Laden's finest hour in Saudi: the putting to use of everything he had learned in the war against the Soviets for the benefit of his home country. In fact, it proved anything but. He sent a "told you so" letter to Fahad, setting out how the kingdom could defend itself with its own forces. All his al-Qa'ada

forces would relocate to Saudi Arabia promised Mr. bin Laden. There would be a huge surge in Arab Mujahedin, he claimed. Instead of grabbing his plan, Fahad was dismissive. Worse, Fahad sent for the Americans. This was a shattering blow; "the most shocking moment of my life" Mr. bin Laden has called it.

Depressed and ignored, he cut himself off from the royal family and sought solace with religious scholars. At his request, they issued a fatwa that military training was a religious duty. He went into overdrive, circulating the edict throughout Saudi and persuading people to head for Afghanistan for their training. Around 4,000 made the trip. The Saudis moved against him. He was taken in for questioning, more to scare him than anything else. The die was cast: he had to leave the country. Claiming he needed to go overseas temporarily to sort out a business difficulty, Mr. bin Laden went straight to Pakistan, from where he sent a letter to his brother saying he would not return and apologizing for the deceit.

He could not stay in Pakistan (he did not trust the Pakistani authorities to extradite him to Saudi), so went straight to Afghanistan. There he tried to act as a peace broker between the rival factions. His own Mujahedin were ordered to stay out because, he said, it was not their place to get drawn into domestic politics. Rightly or wrongly, the Saudis and Pakistanis, both of whom were increasingly reliant on the US, saw him as a target. Attempts were made to kidnap or kill him. At the end of 1991, he fled to what he saw as a safer haven, in Sudan.

Contrary to reports, say his friends, his motivation was not to embark on another jihad in Africa. Sudan was under purist Muslim rulers, desperately poor and in urgent need of his engineering and construction expertise. The Sudanese government welcomed him, but they were also wary, refusing for a time to allow his al-Qa'ada followers to go anywhere near the troubled south of the



country. It was hard, though, for ministers not to embrace the new arrival. He threw himself into large-scale building projects.

His move to Sudan provoked suspicion in Saudi and the US. Sudan was one of the few countries to support Iraq in the Gulf War. Secretly, the Saudis outlawed him, freezing his assets in the kingdom. In Sudan, though, bin Laden and al-Qa'ada became symbols of good, running aid programmers and attracting their wealthy Saudi contacts to invest in the country. In 1994, the Saudis went public with their hostility and withdrew his citizenship. His response was to disavow his ties to the modern Saudi Arabia and to form, with other opponents, the Advice and Reform Committee or ARC. This was a political lobbying group, issuing plenty of hot air about the Saudi regime but not openly advocating violence. But terrorism did occur, and much of it laid at Mr. bin Laden's door. A car bomb in Riyadh in 1995 was blamed on him, with the Saudis producing video "confessions" from four Afghans for the attack. It was possible they were acting on his orders. But it is worth remembering that thousands of would-be Muslim fighters went through his camps. As with the atrocities in the US, making a direct link with Mr. bin Laden was difficult. The Saudis and their American allies stepped up pressure on Sudan to expel Mr. bin Laden. Seeing the writing on the wall, he went first, back to Afghanistan. His chief supporter was Yunis Khalis, who later became a key figure in the Taliban.

Another bomb, in Saudi, pointed to Mr. bin Laden and his militia. At ease in Afghanistan where he was revered, he turned his attention to the source of what he saw as the harm being done to his homeland. He issued a "declaration of war" against the US. Twelve pages long, it called for America's removal from the Arabian Peninsula. When the Taliban swept to power in late 1996, Mr. bin Laden was unsure of his position. He need not have

worried. The Taliban embraced him, admiring and thanking him for his struggle. They saw him as a rich Saudi who gave up everything for the jihad. He was a hero, someone they were honor bound to save. His protection was guaranteed. They respected him even more when he advised them against exploitation from Pakistani businessmen.

Two factors may weigh against Mr. bin Laden with the Taliban. One is that the US does provide clear, irrefutable evidence of his involvement in last week's attacks. That will lie heavily with the Taliban who find themselves being persecuted for harboring someone for starting a war they did not sanction.

They are men of principle: bombing without proof will not move them. The other is the thought that Mr. bin Laden's power exceeds their own. Otherwise, and he is adept at keeping good relations with the Taliban, he is safe. Their attitude towards him was reinforced when his Arab Mujahedin fought to secure Kabul against Afghan rebels in the north. Towards the end of 1997, the Americans tried to capture Mr. bin Laden, planning a special forces raid and rehearsing it in Pakistan. The mission was aborted as being too difficult.

Mr. bin Laden's mood hardened. When religious scholars in Afghanistan issued a fatwa, possibly at his behest, calling for the expulsion of Americans by any means from the region, he saw it as giving him the license he needed. To the worry of Saudi and Western security agencies, he embarked on an expansion drive. Previously, his followers had been drawn from the Arab world. Now he went pan-Islamic, seeking and attracting comrades from the former Soviet republics, Pakistan and India. He saw himself as infallible and went on a media offensive. For some time, a vicious spiral had been forming. Muslim terrorists were arrested in the West and said to be bin Laden followers. Bombs exploded at the US embassies in

Kenya and Tanzania. Again, they were attributed to Mr. bin Laden. They may well have been but the US vitriol served only to enhance his legend among militant Muslims. That status was enhanced even further when the US launched its missile strikes against what it said were his bases in Sudan and Afghanistan, and the Sudan target turned out to be a harmless factory.

The strike in Sudan was a disaster for the US. In the Arab world, Mr. bin Laden became seen as the one man who could withstand the might of America. He has three sorts of supporter: those under his direct command who number a few hundred and are based in Afghanistan; a wider group of militants who are spread out across the world; and non-active admirers. It is the middle group that causes most worry. Probably trained in one of his camps, they have spread out, some to the West, where to all intents and purposes they lead normal lives. They do not need to be in contact with Mr. bin Laden. Their struggle is his struggle; he has gone from being field commander to spiritual inspiration.

He is nowhere near as rich as reports suggest; "a few million at most" said one family member. His assets in Saudi were long frozen. The family firm still exists but he has cut himself off from his relatives. He was also forced to liquidate some smaller businesses when one of his followers made a rare defection to the Saudi side. In the early days, he did receive donations, especially from Saudi, but these are thought to have dried up.

On the other hand, why does he need a huge amount of money? He lives abstemiously.

Many of his followers had access to their own money before joining him. He does not fight

an expensive, hi-tech war. In the region he inhabits weapons are cheaper than staple foods. The hijackers last week carried small knives and boxes they said they were bombs. His finances would, though, stretch to some flying courses and some flight simulator software. If he was responsible.